

5.91
STATEMENT RECENT SOUTHERN PINE BEETLE EPIDEMIC

1. History of Southern Pine Beetle in Southeast Texas

There have been reported epidemics in SE Texas since 1870. 44

Some of the epidemics terminated about 1911, 1919, 1930, 1939, 1951. Perhaps the current epidemic has subsided, but this won't be known until the summer of 1963.

Most recent epidemic started near Honey Island January 1957. Heavy rains in late summer and fall of 1959 made the infested area inaccessible and control extremely difficult. Hurricane Carla of 1961 undoubtedly caused extreme spread of the insect.

2. Costs and Timber Losses

Value of stumpage destroyed in the most recent epidemic is \$2,738,000. This consisted of 103,887 M of sawlogs and 34,460 cords of pulpwood. MC

Expenditures by landowners for control have been \$765,176. The Federal government has reimbursed landowners at approximately one-third of cost of control.

3. Prompt Control is Vital

Peaks of uncontrolled spots are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Quantity of Uncontrolled Spots</u>
1958	June 21	27
1959	August 8	30
	December 15	29
1960	July 7	226
1961	August 4	361
1962	August 6	1050+

4. Excerpts from Reports by Texas Forest Service Personnel in Their Efforts to Obtain Cooperation from Small Landowners

"Went to owner's home twice and talked with his wife. Owner had looked at infestations but I gathered that he did not want to invest in spray equipment and was willing to take the chance that the infestations would become inactive. Has suffered serious damage. Southland tracts to north are likely affected by these infestations."

"Owner was notified when first small infestation appeared. Owner already had facilities for cutting and spraying but after a slow start at control work decided that it was too costly and gave up concentrated control effort. Luckily his timber was an 'island' of pine on the edge of the prairie west of Dayton and there were no adjacent timber owners to be damaged."

"Owner had a fine stand of timber on his tract, approximately 1/3 to 1/2 was in pine, the remainder hardwood. First infestation was ground checked and owner was immediately notified. Owner was financially able to have control work done but none was ever initiated. Owner was contacted at least four times as new active infestations were observed and as the initial infestation increased in

size and severity. Two large ownerships to the south and four ownerships to the north had beetle damage which possibly stemmed from the large and active infestations on this tract."

"Five landowners, acreages varying from 30 to 700, were contacted concerning infestations around Lake Houston. When first contacted, all of the owners had the same ideas about beetle control, 'Don't want to spend money to save trees on land which is valuable for real estate, not timber.' Only one finally did some control work."

"Mr. X is one of the most prominent men in Blank County. He owns something over 70,000 acres of land, has oil leases, various buildings, etc. When asked about the problem of controlling the Southern pine beetle infestations on his property he states that he is ready and willing if someone will buy his timber at regular price and then cut and spray the remaining. In other words, he is more interested in the money than he is in controlling the Southern pine beetle. XYZ Company did control one spot for him several months back but he has done nothing about the remaining except try to sell timber. Mr. X has infested spots in five locations in the Control Zone."

"Mr. X was contacted concerning the Southern pine beetle infestation on his land. The problem was presented to him explaining the project, reasons for need of control and procedures involved. After considerable discussion of the situation Mr. X stated that the timber wasn't worth anything any way and that he didn't intend to control his infestation. He even went so far as to say that he didn't care if the beetles killed all the pine timber in East Texas."

"Mr. X is an example to lots of people in this community. He is president of the local bank, deals in real estate, and an outstanding member of various clubs and organizations in Blank County. When asked the question of what he intends to do about controlling the Southern pine beetle, Mr. X states, 'Hell, I don't intend to do anything about them.' When asked why not, he replies that it would cost too much and he could not afford it. Mr. X has spots in five locations."

"Mr. X is more or less bed-ridden and lets his son help look after their land. I talked to his son concerning the control of their three infestations. He said that they had not been controlled and since it was so expensive, his father said to just let it go. The son seemed to be interested when I told him of the loan of our sprayers, and that we would furnish the B.H.C. if he would provide the labor and other equipment. However, his interest faded when told of the amount required to spray an average size tree, since they have a larger infestation."

"Mr. X is one of the co-owners of the Blank Company. When asked about controlling the Southern pine beetle he seemed to have a negative attitude in general. He has several infestations on his land, but instead of control work Mr. X is watching these spots grow until it would justify his logging crew coming to salvage, spraying none of the tops, stumps, or small timber that cannot be used for sawlogs. His idea seems to be continue to try to make money from his timber after the Southern pine beetle starts instead of trying to control the beetles in early stages of infestation."

5. Comments on Proposed Bill

a. TFS already has police powers in protection against fires. There probably was resistance to its enactment.

b. Police powers for insect control of forest trees were at one time included in the Texas Department of Agriculture law that gave it pest control

powers over nursery stock. When the bill was revised in the 1959 legislative session, control over forest trees was omitted.

c. Speed is essential in control after an infestation is discovered. Even one uncontrolled spot of infestation can serve as a source of infestation of forest lands in a radius of several miles.

d. Ample notice is given to landowners in immediate area round where pest has been discovered. Proceedings set forth in detail.

e. Landowner may appeal to courts if he believes himself aggrieved when notified by Texas Forest Service of finding pest on his lands and measures he should exercise to control it.

f. On holdings of less than 50 acres in a given county in which infestation occurs, State will bear the cost of control.

g. Funds to do the control work would come from money in regular budget of Texas Forest Service.

ADF/bc

22 January 1963